

THE
Freeness of Gods Grace 4
IN THE
Forgiveness of Sins,
BY
JESUS CHRIST;
VINDICATED.

Against the Doctrine of Mr. *Fergusson*, in his
Sermon Preached at the Morning Lecture,
the fifth of *August* 1668. in a Letter
to a Friend.

By *H. W.* a lover of the Truth that is according to Godliness.

Rom. 3. 24. *Being justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ.*

Col. 1. 14. *In whom we have redemption through his Blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*

Prov. 12. 15. *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.*

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My Friend,



Eing the other day in your company, you told me of your being the fifth instant at the morning Lecture, where (as you said) a great company of well disposed people were assembled to hear: I was glad to hear it.

Then you gave me to understand that one Mr. *Fergusson* there preached at that time from *Heb. 2. 10.* And you also gave me in writing an account of his Sermon, desiring me to peruse it. Sir, your Paper I return with many thanks, and therewith also a few Animadversions upon the Sermon, which you may read when your leisure permits you.

There are three faults inexcusable in a Preacher, as all do acknowledge, for it is in it self most evident.

First, To propose a Text out of the Holy Scriptures, and thence to draw Doctrines which are true in themselves, but which the Text affords not. This is one way of prophaning the Word of God, and of doing the Work of the Lord negligently. But,

Secondly, It is a greater fault, and much more to be lamented, when such Doctrines or *Theses* are grounded upon a Text of Scripture, which are so far from being rightly drawn from that Text, that they are deducible from no other Text, being such Doctrines as contain not the truth in them, but are false, and therefore contrary to the Scriptures of Truth. But,

Thirdly, The fault is then greatest and most of all to be lamented, when the Doctrines or Articles proposed as from a Scripture, are not meerly false, and errors of a mean import, but are false in matters of high concernment in Faith or Manners.

These three things, Sir, came to mind by the unhappy occasion of your Preachers Sermon, whom I may charge, though not with the first of those faults, (for he was not so little unhappy, as to preach Truth from a Text that reach'd it not to him) yet I may charge him with not onely the second; but the third also: For alas! (I

grieve to speak it) he preach'd such a Doctrine, which greatly reflects disparagement upon Almighty God, in respect of his Goodness, Wisdom, and Power, and therefore must needs have much of malignity in it, how devout soever the Preacher may seem to be.

Now that you may not think me to be rash and inconsiderate in thus charging that Gentleman, give me leave to evince by a few words the truth of the Charge.

I pray consider his Text, and his Doctrine grounded thereon.

The words of the Text are these,

For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings.

His Doctrine was this;

'That there was no other way imaginable or possible, whereby
'God might forgive sins, but by a full and plenary satisfaction
'made to his Justice by the death of his Son.

He branches this Doctrine into three Propositions; which are these,

1. 'That it is not possible for God to pardon sin and save sinners, without satisfaction to his Justice.

2. 'That it was impossible to obtain satisfaction by any other way but by Christ.

3. 'That Christ hath given God a full and plenary satisfaction, and thereby made way for the bringing of all those Sons to Glory that the Father and he agreed about when he undertook this work.

Now consider (I pray you) seriously whether any man but one that is first prepossess'd with such an Opinion, could have drawn such a Doctrine from that Text. The terms I am sure are at a vast distance. The Text saith, *It became him for whom are all things, &c.* Now suppose that to be in the Text which is not, viz. That Christ made satisfaction to the Justice of God for mens sins, in Mr. F's sence; it will not follow from this, *It became God, &c.* First, That it was impossible to have been otherwise; for Mr. F. knows well enough, that though God cannot chuse good or evil, yet he may chuse this or that good; so that when it is said, That such or such a thing becomes God, it doth not follow that the omission

omission of that, and the chusing of another, might not also have become him. It did well agree with the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to make the Captain of our Salvation perfect through sufferings; But what are we, poor silly Worms, that we should hence conclude, That the Wisdom of God could have found out no other way for his goodness to appear unto us in! Let us be thankful for this that he hath done, and admire his Wisdom in it; but let us not by our wisdom set bounds to the onely wise God. However, let us not do it, grounding upon a Text that will not justify us therein, as this Preacher doth.

But secondly, How doth it arise from this Text, That Christ made full satisfaction to the Justice of God? The Text saith, — *To make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings.* As if for God to make Christ perfect through sufferings, and for Christ to make satisfaction to the Justice of God were all one. Whereas, for God in bringing many Sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings, seems plainly to imply no more but this; To make the Captain a perfect and compleat Captain or Leader. 1. By making him to be to his Soldiers or Followers, those Believers he was to bring to Glory, a Pattern in doing, in suffering, and in receiving of Glory. 2. By making him to have pity and compassion towards them in all difficulties and sufferings, through having experience of the same himself. 3. And lastly, By giving him power to supply them in the way, and give them glory at the end, inasmuch as by his sufferings he came to sit down at the right Hand of God. If any man of a more refined wit than ordinary, can draw any thing more from these terms, yet I perswade my self, That no man will ever be able to convince an impartial hearer, that Christ's being made perfect through sufferings, is, Christ's making full satisfaction to the Justice of God. But if this Proposition be not to be found in the Text, much less the other two; that it was not possible for God to pardon without a satisfaction, and that no other could do it but Christ.

Now having shew'd you, that his Doctrine is not in his Text, nor deducible from it; I shall shew you in the second place that it is false, and therefore not deducible from any Text, but contrary to the Scriptures. But to make good this charge, it would behove me.

me to write a large Volumn, if I should disprove all the frivolous Arguments that are wont to be brought for the maintaining it, but I intend only a short Letter, and therefore shall content my self,
 1. To shew you the contradiction of this Doctrine to it self, and to the holy Scriptures. 2. To vindicate those Scriptures, or the chief of them he brings for proof, from giving countenance to his Doctrine. And,

First, That it is contradictory to it self and the Scriptures, observe two clauses in it ; one is, Making full satisfaction to the Justice of God ; the other is, God's forgiving sins. To make full satisfaction to the Justice of God for sin, is in this Preacher's sence, *To bear all that punishment which is due to men for their sins in their stead.* To forgive sin, is, according to the Apostle Paul, (Rom. 4. 7, 8.) *Not to impute sin*, or to deal with the sinner as if he had not sinned. But now every one may perceive that these two are contradictory ; as, to bear all the punishment due to sin, and to bear none of the punishment due to sin. To exact of the sinner or his surety (as they speak) all the punishment which he owes ; and, to exact neither of the sinner nor his surety any thing that he owes : For whether the sinner himself or his surety bear the punishment of his sin, sin is in that case imputed. If these be not flat contradictions, I know not what are ; for the terms in the affirmation and negation, are taken in the same sence and latitude : So that for any one to say, That God could not pardon mens sins till Christ had made full satisfaction to his Justice, is alike as to say, The King cannot pardon a Rebel without punishing as the Law requires ; forasmuch as to pardon, is, not to punish as the Law requires. And this is so clear and evident, that in all other cases save in this, even the Asserters of this Opinion do easily perceive the absurdity : Which of them having committed an offence, deserving death by the Law of the Land, would account himself pardoned, if all that punishment were exacted that the Law required ? In debts of money, which may be transfer'd from one to another, which of them would account himself forgiven a debt of an hundred pounds, if he himself, or any other paid it in his name ? What an empty vain word would Forgiveness be at this rate ? Pay me all you owe me and I will forgive you, is either a senceless or cruel saying. What ! must we be abus'd onely in our

our Faith? Must Absurdities there be reputed for Mysteries? Why not believe the *Papists* then, when they assert the Bread to be Flesh, and say it is a Mystery? Nay, much rather believe them than these, for they have the words of Scripture on their side, but these have not, save ill-forg'd premises. Thus you may see this Doctrine is contradictory to it self, as much as punishing and not punishing, exacting a debt and not exacting it, are flatly contradictory.

That it is contrary to the Scripture, is proved by the same labour, for every thing absurd, and contradictory to it self, must needs be contrary to the holy Scriptures. But more particularly, 1. It is contrary to all those Scriptures that speak of God's forgiving, or pardoning, or remitting our sins through Jesus Christ, or through his Blood. And I think I need not tell you, the Scriptures are full of such. Will it not be impertinent to name a few among so great a number? Nay, is it not the main purport of the Gospel, to shew that God forgives us our sins by Jesus Christ? *John Baptist* the fore-runner of Christ, — *Preaching the Baptism of Repentance for the remission of sins*, Luk. 3. 3. Christ himself taught us to pray, *Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors*, Mat. 6. 12. & v. 14, 15. *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* Will any man be beholden to us for forgiving his trespasses, when we have receiv'd full satisfaction, as much to a tittle as the Law allows? Or, dare we say, We immitate God, when we do not pardon them any thing, except we have our due to a doit? Might not the Servant in the Parable (*Mat. 18.*) have excus'd himself for his severity to his fellow-servant by this Doctrine? For his Lord said, v. 32, 33. *O thou wicked Servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?* Might he not have replied, Lord, thou didst receive a full and plenary satisfaction for me, but I received no satisfaction for him, and therefore thy example is no Argument in this case? Is not this to elude the most plain and excellent Precepts and Arguments in the Gospel? Christ saith in the institution of his last Supper, *Mat. 26. 28. For this is my Blood of the New Testament [Marg. Covenant] which is shed for*

many for the remission of sins. He doth not say, for the satisfaction of divine Justice; for the bearing the punishment of your sins: for what hath a Covenant or Testament to do with satisfaction, or punishment for sin? And after his resurrection, *he said unto them, [the Disciples] Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins [not satisfaction for sins] should be preached in his name &c.* accordingly the preachings of the Apostles and Evangelists are full of this Doctrine of remission of sins. See a few, *Act. 2. 38. ch. 3. 19. ch. 5. 31. ch. 10. 43. ch. 13. 38.*

2. This Doctrine of Christ satisfying the Justice of God by bearing the punishment due to their sins, is contrary to all those Scriptures, that attribute our Remission or Salvation to the Grace, Mercy and Kindness of God: for what is more contrary to Mercy than punishing the miserable to the utmost? what is more contrary to Grace, than to give nothing but what one is paid for? what more opposite to Kindness or Goodness, than exacting all that strict Justice may require? Now the Name of the Lord is proclaimed, *Exod. 34. 5, 6, 7. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping mercy for Thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin;* (Here it follows, that I may take notice of it in my way, because the Preacher urges it to prove that God cannot forgive sin without satisfaction) *and that will by no means clear the guilty.* I pray Friend, consider this Text that is cited by us both, and that upon a contrary account, and see if it can possibly be meant by the Lords not clearing the guilty, after his being merciful, gracious, &c. that he will indeed pardon sin, when he hath taken as much punishment as the Law requires, but he will by no means bate any thing of that. As if the Lord were very gracious and merciful, because he takes no more than the Law allows. O wonderful Mercy, that this Preacher attributes to the most merciful Lord God! see *Psal. 103. 8, 10. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.* But according to this Gentleman, God must reward every one according to his Iniquities; for every one must bear the full punishment of his sins, either in his own person or in the person of another. See *v. 13: Like as a Father pitieth his Children*

Children, so the Lord pityeth them that fear him. That is, if the Lord can get any body to be punished in their stead, and make full satisfaction to his avenging Justice, then they shall go free. See also *Jer. 3. 12. Joel 2. 13. Jona. 4. 2.* or shall I transcribe a great part of the Bible to this purpose. I cannot omit to mind you of our Lords precept, *Luk. 6. 35. 36.* where he saith, *Love ye your enemies, and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the Children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful.* Is God kind to the unthankful and evil? how comes it to pass? according to this Gentleman, either Christ or some other made satisfaction for them, or else I know not how it could be. *2 Cor 1. 3.* God is called *the Father of mercies.* In that Prophecie, *Luke. 1. 77, 78.* To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy [marg. *Bowels of mercy*] of our God. The great reason of the blessings of the new Covenant is this: *for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.* *Heb. 8. 12.* I would fain pass from this matter as obvious to every one, but that text in *Jam. 2. 13.* will not let me go. *For he shall have Judgement without Mercy, that hath shewed no Mercy: and Mercy rejoiceth against Judgement.* Where you may observe that Mercy is opposed to Judgement or satisfaction of Justice, and that gloryeth against this. Whereas were this Gentlemans doctrine true, Judgement would glory against Mercy.

That this Doctrine of full satisfaction to avenging Justice (I say) is contrary to all those Scriptures that attribute our remission or salvation to the Grace of God: me thinks I should not need to cite texts in this case to such as profess to live under a Covenant of Grace, and commonly suspect every thing that is but said to lessen the Grace or favour of God. But give me leave to mention one or two among a multitude. And that of the Apostle to the *Ephesians*, (*ch. 1. 7.*) doth first present it self, *In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his Grace.* Here forgiveness of sins is ascribed to the riches of Gods Grace, though it comes through the Blood of Christ. Would it have bin any such rich Grace for God to let men alone after he had punished their sins to the utmost? See *Col. 1. 14.* a parallel place

to this in *Eph. 1.* In both which you may note that redemption is expounded by remission of sins. See also *Rom. 3.24.* *Being justified freely by his Grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.* How justified by Grace or favour, if by a full satisfaction? O, you will say; Because God gave Christ, and procur'd him to make this satisfaction. But suppose that could be; How then justified *freely or gratis* by his grace, if he received a full satisfaction? Can a man be said to deliver his imprisoned Debtor *freely or gratis* by his Grace out of prison, and from his obligation, though he procure another to pay him the money? sure Mr. F. would not think so, if he were that captive Debtor and so deliver'd. And this Apostle in the next *Chap. Rom. 4. 4.* and *11. 6.* argues the opposition between Grace and Debt, and Grace and works, shewing that they mutually destroy each other; so that if God received full satisfaction, he is obliged in Justice, as this Preacher saith, to take no more; and our Justification accordingly will be no longer of Grace, but of Debt. — Thus this Preacher doth unawares destroy the Grace of God, while he preaches up a penal satisfaction of Justice.

Now I might proceed to other Scriptures and Arguments to which this Doctrine of satisfaction is contrary: but I am writing a Letter, and perhaps I may have occasion to produce some of them by way of Answer to some of his Argumentations. And I shall as I go along, prove against him that which I proposed in the beginning, as the third and greatest fault in a Preacher, namely, That his Doctrine is not only false, but false in a matter of high concernment in the faith of a Christian.

And first I take notice he argues from Gods threatnings that there must be a satisfaction: but he allows this satisfaction to be made either by the Criminal or by his Surety. But I would fain have him to shew me that threatning of punishment, that may be satisfied either by the party offending or his Surety. To *Adam* he saith, *In the day thou eatest — dying thou shalt die,* *Gen. 1. 17.* and, *Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things, &c.* *Deut. 27.26.* & *Gal. 3.10.* *The soul that sinneth it shall die,* *Ezek. 18.4.* Here is no mention of a Surety. Let him that addeth, *or its Surety*, take heed of the Curse denounced against him that addeth or diminisheth &c. but perhaps he hath a Surety that can and will bear it for him.

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2. He argues from the congruity of it to the Righteousness, Wisdom and other Attributes of God, to pardon sin upon a full compensation. He cites Rom. 3. 25, 26. — *that he might be just.* But we have seen already in the 24. vers. of that Chap. that the Justice there meant, is such as consists with justifying *gratis* and therefore without a full compensation.

3. He argues from the Holiness, Purity and Righteousness of the Nature of God to the necessity of the punishment of every sin. But he doth here again take the boldness of adding a surety, for the bearing of this punishment. I beseech you my Friend, make a stand, and tell me, supposing such a nature in God as obliges him to punish every sin, whether that Nature can be satisfied with the punishment of another that is innocent instead of him that is guilty? And again, whether that Holy Nature of God doth not oblige him as much not to punish the Righteous, yea though he be willing, as to punish the guilty? He saith, *He cannot see how it was consistent with the Righteousness of God, to punish an innocent, if he could have saved sinners without it.* O wonderful Righteousness of God, that obliges him to punish an innocent person, because he cannot pardon freely the least sin! An innocent person did I say? You must suppose that this person is of equal worth to a whole World of innocent persons; and then you must suppose that God is necessitated from his Nature to punish eternally this whole World of innocent persons, if he will save from eternal punishment a few guilty persons. This may seem strange, but if you consider it, you will find it full of Truth; For it is suppos'd, even by this Preacher, that Christ did as much in the bearing of the punishment of mens sins, as if the whole World of sinners should have been punished eternally. Now it follows clearly, that if you suppose the Surety to have been Righteous Men, and not Jesus Christ; there must have been a whole World of such Righteous Men to have suffer'd eternally, to have done that which Christ did in satisfying for mens sins. I know, they that receive this Doctrine from the Pulpit, are wont to consider the sufferings of Christ as the sufferings of a few hours, but they ought to consider them as equivalent to eternal sufferings: They ought also to consider them, not only as the sufferings of a single Person, but of as many persons as it is possible may be saved by him, or rather, of as

many as they are of worth to save, which are, they say, all the World, and more if more there were: And then let them if they can ascribe such a nature as this to the most merciful and just God. O, whither doth Error drive men? Here perhaps they will argue, That it was the single manhood only that suffered, it was the God-head that supported it, and gave weight and vallue to the sufferings; but the God-head cannot suffer. But what is that to say, but either to confess the charge I have laid against that Doctrine, or else to make the satisfaction childish and ludicrous. For if the satisfaction given by Christ be real and something distinct from what God had before, then it contains all that horrible cruelty I have spoken of; if it be not real nor distinct from what God had before such satisfaction given, then it is childish, giving with the one hand, and receiving with the other, or putting the thousands of pounds of his own Godhead into the scale with the penny of the manhood, (as I may so say) to make up a full satisfaction or payment; Who that considers it can bear such a Doctrine?

He goes about to prove the necessity of punishment of all sin from two considerations; first, *From the nature of sin, to which punishment is due without any determination of God.* That he that doth ill should suffer ill, is not so much (saith he) from the Will of God, as from the Nature of ill. But then, 1. How comes it to pass that this punishment is not inflicted upon him that doth the ill, but upon another? Doth not his bringing in a Surety here, overthrow his reason? If sin require to be punished, it is in him that doth the evil, not in another? But, 2. suppose sin doth in its own nature deserve punishment, yet this doth not necessitate God to punish every sin: For we men, although we have a natural right to our limbs, and he that maim's us deserves punishment for so doing, if there were no positive Law to that purpose, notwithstanding he that is so maimed may forgive him that offence. So he that sins, gives God a right to punish him, but God may dispense with his right, if he please, or else he were more impotent than we contemptible worms.

He saith, *We may observe throughout the Bible that the Principle by which God punisheth sin, is the Righteousness of his Nature, so that it is against Justice in him not to punish:* And he cites, 2 Thes. 1. 6, 7. *It is a Righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them*

them that trouble you, and to you that are troubled, rest. Here we see it is as well righteous to recompence to them that are troubled, rest, as to recompence tribulation to them that trouble. But is that also from the necessity of God's Nature, and not from his gracious Will, and merciful Determination? Again, saith he, *The necessity of sins punishment is argued from the Heathens, having a sense of it without Divine Revelation.* But did not the same Light in the Heathens teach them, that God was Merciful and Gracious, pardoning sin without a satisfaction or full punishment? The *Ninivites* did not believe that God either by the necessity of his Nature or Threatning was oblig'd to punish. *Who can tell (say they, notwithstanding an absolute threatning) if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?* *Jonah 3.9.* And in *vers. 10.* it is said, *And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them, and he did it not.* What? Did he inflict this evil upon some other that should bear it in their stead? Where is this necessity of his Nature, or veracity of his threatnings, obliging him to punish every sin?

He saith, *It would render all Laws ludicrous, if the breach of them should not be punished.* And will not all men hate and abhor that Government as cruel and tyrannical, where every the least breach of the Law must certainly be fully avenged? Do not all Governors forgive offences which they might punish, and that with great applause of their clemency, and as that wherein they do most of all resemble God the great Governour? But are therefore all the Laws in the World ludicrous? But he will make us amends for this intollerable severity, by an execrable cruelty, and that is, by substituting one who is in respect of his worth æquipollent to so many, or so many hundreds rather of innocent persons as are needed for sureties, to suffer this punishment instead of the Offenders. But how contrary is this to the reason of punishment, and to Scripture? which though it says that Christ *was made a surety of a better Testament,* (*Heb. 7. 22.*) yet never our surety, much less to bear punishment in our stead. And here he cites (indeed in a quite contrary sence to its true meaning, so strangely impertinent are his proofs) *Gen. 18. 25. Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* For *Abraham* urges this against God's destroying

ing the few Righteous with the many Wicked ; but Mr. F. urges it for the many righteous, or of one equivalent to many that a few wicked may go free. This is the natural Righteousness of God the Judge of all the Earth, which he Preaches. The Phœnicians and Carthaginians sacrificing a few men, or some of their Children in the behalf of the whole people, seems to come short of this in cruelty and unrighteousness.

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Now he comes to his second Proposition, *That it was impossible for satisfaction to be made any other way but by Christ.* But having made it appear that the satisfaction he talks of is inconsistent with the Nature of God, with his Righteousness, Mercy and Grace, as they are set forth in Scripture, this Proposition falls to the ground, and is impertinent. Onely I may observe, that in rejecting of Sacrifices, new Obedience and Sufferings, though he cites *Psalm. 51. 16.* for the defectiveness of Sacrifices, yet he takes no notice of the next verse, where the Psalmist saith, *The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit ; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* So he cites *Psalm. 50. 12.* to the same purpose, but waves that which follows in verse 14, & 15. *Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most High. And call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me.* He doth not reject slain Beasts, and burnt Offerings, that he may have slain men, or such as may be eternally or infinitely punished and tormented in the stead of the guilty ; but he requires in those places sincere and hearty obedience in things morally and truly good, in place of things ceremonial and only positively good.

Here he tells us, *That the sufferings of men cannot satisfy, because they are not infinite in weight, for men are not capable of that. They are capable of infinite sufferings in respect of length and continuance ; but that is to be alwayes suffering without ever compleating satisfaction.* Thus we see that the punishment laid upon Christ, is according to him equal to the sufferings of men for evermore. But these men if they had been fit sureties, must have been righteous men ; so the sufferings of Christ are equal to the sufferings of millions of righteous men for evermore. But how dare we say, That God, who loved his own Son more than millions of Righteous men, much more than millions of sinners, should yet lay upon him the punishment due to sinners, and that which is equal to the

the eternal sufferings of millions of righteous men, for the saving of a lesser number of sinners? would it not even grieve a man of Ingenuity to be saved (if it were possible) at this rate?

He saith *the Satisfaction is alwaies spoken of, as having been done to reconcile God.* But it will be very hard, I think impossible, for him to shew but one Scripture that saith so, nay that saith but that Christ dyed to reconcile God to us, which is far less. How ordinary is it for men to think the Scriptures speak what they would have them speak? It saith indeed, that — when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, *Rom. 5. 10.* And that God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. And God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, *2 Cor. 5. 18; 19.* what need of reconciling him that so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son? &c. *Joh. 3. 16.*

We come now to his proof of the main matter, (*viz.*) That Jesus Christ hath given the Father a full and plenary satisfaction, &c. Here by the way, he saith, Christ hath given the Father Satisfaction. I desire therefore to know who satisfied the Son and Holy Spirit. Or is the Son and Holy Spirit of a more merciful and gracious nature, so that they will pardon sin without a satisfaction, though the Father cannot?

For the clearing of this proposition he saith, 1. That Christ underwent what we should have undergone. And this, he saith, was in point of feeling Death and the Curse, an infinite punishment as to weight, though it was but short as to time: as Hanging is shorter than sitting in the Stocks two or three hours. He did not only undergo the Death which the Law cursed, but all the Curse which God could put into his Death. Thus far he. Here he cites *Luk. 22. 44. Mat. 26. 37, 38. Mar. 14. 33. Heb. 5. 7. Mat. 27. 46. Joh.* Now my Friend, I pray read all these texts consideratly, & as many more as ye please, and see whether all or any of them say, that Christ underwent an infinite punishment, or all the Curse which God could put into his Death. Whereas he saith, Christ sweet great drops of Blood, *Luke* saith, — as it were great drops of blood. But I would ask him a question or two hereupon.

1. Whether it be not part of the curse that men must bear, to know clearly and to be deeply sensible that they have no interest in Gods

Gods favour, and that they never shall have any, and that God hates them with an everlasting hatred ?

2. Whether a stinging and guilty conscience, as having justly deserved the Curse in their own persons, be not a main Ingredient in the Curse which men must bear ? And if these be parts of the Curse, then let him tell me whether Christ when he was in an Agony in the Garden, or when he was on the Cross, or at any other time underwent either of these ? for did he not pray to God in the Garden, and call him Father ? Did not God send an Angel to comfort him ? Did he not upon the Cross invoke God, saying, *My God, my God*, though he had forsaken him in giving him up to the power of his enemies ? and did he not then commend his Spirit into his Father's hands ? *Luk. 23. 46.* Are these the Actions, and this the state of a man under the greatest Curse that God can lay upon him ? Then be comforted ye damned, for it will not be so hard with you, as is imagined ? Did Christ think that God hated him, when he knew he was his well-beloved Son ? and that this obedience of his in dying, should be rewarded with eternal Glory ? what Doctrine is this, that brings in the Holy One of God, despairing of Gods favour, hated of God and tormented in his own conscience with sense of unpardonable guilt ! as it necessarily follows from his assertions.

He saith, it would be to lessen the courage of Christ, if his Agony proceeded from a foresight of his Death : not considering what his Text saith, that, *It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many Sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings.* How should Christ be a compleat Captain, if he did not experience as great trials, as any of the Souldiers are like to meet with ? And do not many of the Souldiers his followers, meet with such a sense of sufferings that are before them, as put them into an Agony ? But what if he being to break the Ice, to go first, to be a glorious example, met with greater Hardships and difficulties, than any of those that are to follow him ? Is he not thereby the more fit to be their Captain ? may there not from hence be given a good account of all the sufferings and the death of Christ, that he was to be the Captain of our Salvation ? Did it not well become the Wisdom and Holiness of God to give repentance and remission of sins through such a person,

son, as should obtain this Glory and Power by an obedience accompanied with the hardest sufferings ?

He now goes on to tell us that *Christ underwent this Curse in our stead*. And here he cites *Dan. 9. 26. Rom. 4. 25. 1 Pet. 2. 24. Isa. 53.* which in my Judgment are not the most probable proofs he might have brought for that purpose. But it being false that Christ underwent the eternal Curse, there is no place for his doing it in our stead. Neither did he undergo, that which he did undergo, in our stead, but on our behalf, for our good, and that we should follow his steps. So saith the Apostle Peter : *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps, 1 Pet. 2. 21.* He that doth any thing in another's stead, doth it, that the other may not do it ; but Christ suffered for our Example, not to free us from suffering the like. Christ suffered for us, so he *entered into Heaven for us (Heb. 6. 20.)* not in our stead, but for our good, to be a Priest, and to intercede for us that we may come thither also.

Under this third particular, concerning what Christ hath wrought for us, he talks of *a price for Grace*, and that *all Grace is given by virtue of the satisfaction of Jesus Christ*. He cites to this purpose, *2 Pet. 1. 1. To them that have obtained like precious Faith — through the Righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ* : Whence he collects that God is bound in Justice to give Grace and Faith, because Christ hath bought it. It's strange he should be unmindfull of the Apostle Paul's making *Grace* and *Debt* such opposites as destroy each other, and cannot have place in the same matter, Of which I have spoken something before. Again he considers not the words he utters ; for Faith is said in this Text to be obtained by us, not only through the Righteousness of God, but also through the Righteousness of *Jesus Christ*. Is Christ obliged to give us Faith because he bought it ? It is in the Greek, *Faith in the Righteousness of God, &c.* so Righteousness may be taken for the Object of Faith, and denotes here the faithfulness of God and Christ, promising to us eternal life. These are the men that cry up the Grace of God, the free Grace of God : but my dear Friend, if you will be but at the pains to weigh the matter thoroughly, (which alas few will) you will perceive that their Doctrine of Grace rightly understood, doth quite overthrow Grace. I have shewed you here how his Doctrine of Satisfaction is diametrically opposite to the

Grace of forgiveness of sins, which God did design before the World, to magnifie by Jesus Christ in the Gospel. But he hath a pretty fetch here, whereby he thinks to free himself of this charge; and that is by telling us, (as he doth in his Application) *That the great Mercy as well as Justice of God, appears in this Satisfaction; because my Friends (saith he) though God will have a Satisfaction, yet he will procure it himself, he will be at the cost of it himself. O the wisdom of God in finding it out!*

O that men would but consider what this means! But men are mighty idle and popishly credulous in matters of Faith. The meaning then is this: That God Almighty is necessitated by his Nature to execute the punishment due to all the sins of men; for so he saith that *by sin punishment became due, and being due, it became necessary to be executed*; So that God can no more pardon one sin without due punishment, than he can lie or deny himself. Now it seems this necessity of his Nature gave him liberty (I know not how) to execute this punishment upon others that were righteous, in case they had been Sureties (if any such there had been) instead of the guilty. But there being none such, but only one, to wit, Jesus Christ his wel-beloved Son, who was of so excellent a Nature, that he could bear as much punishment in a few hours, as all the World deserved, and was not able to bear to eternity; Therefore he commands this Son (who would not disobey him) to take upon him a humane nature, and therein to bear this infinite punishment, that so his avenging Justice being satisfied, he might then justify some part of those that had sinned. This is God's procuring the Satisfaction himself; this is being at the cost of it.

But let me argue with him a little: How can that be a true and proper satisfaction, which the Creditor is at the cost of himself? It is but a shew of satisfaction, when one receives but what he himself gives, or is at the cost of. And so this specious Doctrine of satisfying Justice, will be but a meer representation of a thing that is not real. If the Creditor did receive what he did not give, then his Mercy is just so much diminished. If he receiv'd all that was due, his Mercy is nothing at all. You will say his mercy appears in this, that being at liberty to punish the sinner himself, or a righteous person in his stead, he chose to punish the righteous person and to let the sinner go free. This seems to have some little

tle weight in it, but consider it narrowly. Here is indeed some kindness shewn to the person of the sinner : but there is just as much unkindness shewed to the person of the Righteous : but in respect to the sin, there is no mercy at all, for whether he punish the Sinner or the Righteous, the sin is fully avenged. And what good Governour I pray, would not rather in such a case punish the sinner than the Righteous ? But you will say, *he rewarded the Righteous for bearing this punishment.* I answer, that is just as if one did owe me a Thousand pounds, and I should procure another to pay me the money in his stead, and for his encouragement I tell him I will give him a Thousand pounds value in somewhat else. — I say this is no real, but an imaginary and represented satisfaction. So that let him turn himself which way he will, he shall never be able to make full satisfaction to Justice, and Mercy in forgiveness to stand together. By all this it appears that his doctrine is false in a matter of great concernment, as that which obscures, lessens, disparages or overthrows the Righteousness, Goodness, Mercy and Grace of God in the Gospel.

Having now finished what I intended, wherein I pray excuse me if I have been too long, and pardon the errors of haste, I will take my leave ; beseeching you to be very careful of receiving any Doctrine you do not understand, especially if it seem to darken the Wisdom, or any way lessen the Grace of God : but cherish such Principles as represent God and Christ full of Wisdom, Grace and Goodness, and so beget in you humility, love, and confidence towards them. Suffer not your self to be imposed upon by the bare name of *Mystery*, nor by the multitude of those that profess any Doctrine, but look whether you can find it in the holy Scriptures. Consider the great Vanities, Superstitions, yea and Idolatries that have crept into the Church, so that it is no great marvel if many err in this point also. Let us pray that God would be pleased to vindicate the Truth of the Gospel from the Inventions of men, that it may appear in its native beauty and loveliness. I hope you will not satisfy your self with only reading what I have wrote, but will weigh it seriously as a matter of great concernment. I shall much rejoyce to be serviceable to you in it, for I am, Sir,

London, Aug. 13.

Your Friend in the best bands.

1668.

H. W.

1867

My dear Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the above named matter.

I have conferred with the proper authorities and they have decided to grant your request.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. H. Smith